



# California Department of Veterans Affairs

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## NEWS FOR VETERANS

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### A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TOM JOHNSON

This past Wednesday, January 26, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger came to our headquarters building to hold one of his Cabinet meetings. Many folks here in Sacramento went out of their way to ensure that Governor Schwarzenegger's visit was both memorable and informative. Our CDVA staff worked very hard to provide refreshments and mementos the Governor and members of his Cabinet could enjoy while here and then take home as gifts to remember their visit to our department.

We debuted for the Governor, Cabinet Secretaries, and his Senior Staff a new PowerPoint presentation on CDVA and it was well received by the Governor and the others. He and the other Secretaries were very interested, supportive, and asked questions about how they might help us serve veterans. Governor Schwarzenegger was extremely complimentary towards our department and repeatedly thanked all of us for the fine work we all perform on behalf of California's veterans.

In addition to Governor Schwarzenegger's visit last week, I was also excited to continue with my Executive Team Town Halls at the Veterans Homes. I started by visiting separately with residents, staff and managers in the Yountville Veterans Home the week before. Last week I held the same three meetings at both the Barstow and Chula Vista Veterans Homes. In more than 30 years of working in the health care field, I have always found such meetings to be extremely helpful and was glad to start the tradition of Town Halls here at CDVA. I appreciated all the questions and comments I received the past two weeks. On top of our staff's daily dedication to serve the Veteran Members of the Homes, I wish to thank them for their participation in the dialogue at the Town Halls. I know our Department will continue to improve by such communication.

Lastly, I want to give you a sneak peek into one of our upcoming initiatives. Many people (veterans, legislators, veterans advocates and even some CDVA staff!) apparently have the misunderstanding that the Barstow Veterans Home is either closed entirely, or is fully occupied and not accepting any new residents. Neither is true! The beautiful Barstow Veterans Home has capacity to accept new residents into the domiciliary (independent living) units with only a wait of a week or two while their applications are processed. This availability extends to veterans with a non-veteran spouse. The Intermediate Care Facility unit is also open for veterans needing that level of care. Although it is normally quite full, veterans are also accepted into that level of care as well. Over the coming weeks and months we will be asking for everyone's help in spreading this word so we can increase our census at this facility. The dedicated staff at the Barstow Veterans Home are prepared to serve more veterans at their facility. Stay tuned for

more info on this effort in the future.

On behalf of Governor Schwarzenegger (and myself, of course), thanks again for all you do for veterans!

Tom Johnson  
Secretary

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## **MILITARY RELIEF FUND**

The California Military Family Relief Fund was created by legislation last year (SB 1162-Machado). This bill allows taxpayers to designate on their tax returns that a specified amount in excess of their tax liability be transferred to the California Military Family Relief Fund created by the bill to accept contributions from taxpayers and from other sources. The bill also required that money in the fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, be allocated to the Military Department to provide financial aid grants to eligible members of the California National Guard who are California residents, who have been called to active duty.

This is a tax-deductible, voluntary, check-off that you'll find on line 63 of your state income tax forms (Form 540, 540A and 5402EZ), and line 71 of Forms 540NR (short and long). Your contributions will offer much-needed financial assistance to California's National Guard families through an emergency fund grant program.

You may also make direct contributions to:

**Military Family Relief Fund  
c/o Adjutant General  
Military Department  
9800 Goethe Road, Box 42  
Sacramento, CA 95827-3563"**

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